

generating a second electronic document which depicts the first electronic document once printed and assembled in accordance with the instruction; and  
displaying the second electronic document.

3. The method of claim 2, further comprising receiving a second user input that selects a second instruction for assembling the hard copy document, and generating a modified second electronic document which depicts the first electronic document once printed and assembled in accordance with the first and second instructions.

4. The method of claim 2, further comprising:  
modifying a copy of the first electronic document to generate the second electronic document.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein modifying the copy of the first electronic document includes adding a tile depicting a change in the visual appearance resulting from the instruction to a page of the first electronic document.

6. The method of claim 5, further comprising retrieving the tile from a database which associates a plurality of instruction identifiers with a plurality of tiles.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein the database includes an entry for each instruction identifier, each entry including a instruction name and at least one tile.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein each entry includes a first tile associated with a front page of the hard copy document, a second tile associated with an inside right page of the hard copy document, a third tile associated with an inside left page of the hard copy document, and a fourth tile associated with a final page of the hard copy document.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein retrieving the tile includes determining whether the page of the first electronic document is a first page, an inside right page, an inside left page, or a final page, and selecting the tile based on this determination.

10. The method of claim 8, wherein modifying the copy of the first electronic document includes inserting a page into the first electronic document, and adding a tile depicting a change in the visual appearance resulting from the instruction to the inserted page of the copy of the first electronic document.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein the inserted page is a cover sheet.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein the user input is received from an electronic file.

13. The method of claim 1, wherein the instruction identifies a printing media to be used in the hard copy document.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein the instruction identifies the weight, color, texture, or transparency of the printing media.

15. The method of claim 13, wherein the instruction identifies a pre-existing image on the printing media.

16. The method of claim 1, wherein the instruction identifies a cover to be used in the hard copy document.

17. The method of claim 1, wherein the instruction identifies a binding to be used in the hard copy document.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein the instruction identifies a velo™, tape, spiral, multi-ring, comb, magazine style, or stapling binding.

19. The method of claim 1, wherein the instruction identifies a physical modification of a printing media used in the hard copy document.

20. The method of claim 19, wherein the instruction identifies hole punching, folding or cutting of the printing media.

21. The method of claim 1, wherein the user input is received through an interactive user interface.

22. The method of claim 21, wherein receiving the user input includes displaying a plurality of instruction identifiers in a document assembly form on a display, and receiving a user input selecting one of the instruction identifiers.

23. A method of displaying a finished form of a hard copy document, comprising:  
receiving and storing an electronic document in a computer;  
receiving in the computer a user input that selects an instruction for assembling a hard copy document corresponding to the electronic document;  
generating a second electronic document which depicts the visual appearance of the first electronic document once printed and assembled in accordance with the instruction; and  
displaying the second electronic document.

24. A computer-assisted method of creating a hard copy document, comprising:  
receiving an electronic document;  
receiving user input that selects an instruction for assembling a hard copy document;  
depicting a visual appearance of the electronic document as if printed and assembled in accordance with the instruction; and  
providing the electronic document and the user input to a document assembler.

25. The method of claim 24, wherein the document assembler prints the electronic document to create the hard copy document, and assembles the hard copy document after printing in accordance with the instructions corresponding to the user input.

26. The method of claim 24, further comprising creating a second electronic document which depicts the visual appearance of the hard copy document assembled in accordance with the instruction.

27. A computer program, tangibly stored on a computer-readable medium, comprising instructions for causing a computer to:

- receive a first electronic document;
- receive a user input that selects an instruction for assembling a hard copy document;
- determine in the computer the visual appearance of the first electronic document once printed and assembled in accordance with the instruction; and
- produce as output the determined visual appearance.

28. The method of claim 5, wherein the computer receives user input that selects a plurality of instructions.

29. The method of claim 28, wherein the second electronic document includes a plurality of layers to determine the order in which effects associated with the plurality of instructions are applied to the first document.

30. The method of claim 20, wherein the instruction identifies cutting of the printing media.

31. The method of claim 20, wherein the instruction identifies folding of the printing media.

32. The method of claim 5, wherein the instruction identifies the size of the tile.

33. The method of claim 5, wherein the instruction identifies the position of the tile.

34. The method of claim 4, further comprising extracting information from the first electronic document.

35. The method of claim 10, further comprising adding a tile depicting a change in the visual appearance resulting from the instruction to the inserted page of the first electronic document.

36. The method of claim 11, wherein retrieving the tile includes determining whether the cover sheet is a first page or a final page, and selecting the tile based on this determination.

37. The method of claim 5, wherein the instruction identifies a binding option and the tile obscures a portion of the first electronic document where pages of the assembled document would be bound.

38. A method of depicting a hard copy document, comprising:  
receiving in a computer an electronic document;  
receiving in the computer a user input that selects an instruction for assembling a hard copy document by selecting pre-printing physical characteristics of a print media material on which the electronic document will be printed;  
determining in the computer a visual appearance of the first electronic document as if assembled in accordance with the instruction and then printed; and  
producing as output the determined visual appearance.

39. A method of depicting a hard copy document, comprising:  
receiving in a computer an electronic document;

receiving in the computer a user input that selects an instruction for assembling a hard copy document by physically modifying a print media on which the electronic document will be printed;

determining in the computer a visual appearance of the first electronic document as if printed and then assembled in accordance with the instruction; and  
producing as output the determined visual appearance.

40. A method of depicting a hard copy document, comprising:

receiving in a computer a first electronic document;

receiving in the computer a user input that selects an instruction for assembling a hard copy document by binding a plurality of pages of print media on which the electronic document will be printed;

determining in the computer a visual appearance of the first electronic document as if printed and then assembled in accordance with the instruction; and  
producing as output the determined visual appearance.

41. The method of claim 29, wherein the plurality of layers includes an organizational information layer, a background layer, a printed content layer, a virtual proof annotations layer, and a finishing options layer.

42. The method of claim 1, wherein producing the determined visual appearance as output includes displaying the determined visual appearance on a computer monitor.

43. The method of claim 1, wherein determining the visual appearance of the first electronic document includes obscuring a portion of the output in areas corresponding to a portion of the hard copy document that would be obscured when the hard copy document is printed and assembled in accordance with the instruction.

44. The method of claim 43, wherein the instruction identifies a stapling binding, and the obscured portion is located where the staple will be placed in the hard copy document.

45. The method of claim 1, wherein determining the visual appearance of the first electronic document includes providing a visual indication of the thickness of the assembled document.

46. A method of depicting a hard copy document, comprising:  
receiving in a computer an electronic document having content and formatting information;  
receiving in the computer a user input that selects an instruction for assembling a hard copy document;  
determining in the computer a visual appearance of the electronic document once printed with the content arranged according to the formatting information and assembled in accordance with the instruction; and  
producing as output the determined visual appearance.

47. (Amended) A method of generating an assembled hard copy document, comprising:  
receiving an electronic document having content and formatting information;  
receiving a user input that selects an instruction for assembling a hard copy document;  
determining a visual appearance of the electronic document once printed with the content arranged according to the formatting information and assembled in accordance with the instruction;  
displaying the determined visual appearance;  
receiving a user input accepting the determined visual appearance;  
printing the electronic document with the content arranged according to the formatting information to generate a hard copy document; and  
assembling the hard copy document in accordance with the instruction.